/98 cont./

587 [589] [836] [765] A widow has freedom of sexual intercourse. There is no definite period of mourning for her deceased husband and she may remarry at any time, except that she must have the approval of the brothers of the deceased husband. If either the elder or the younger brother of the deceased wishes to marry the widowed sister-in-law, then she may not marry an outsider. Otherwise she returns to her family to marry again. At the time of the second marriage a sorcerer priest is also asked to perform the ritual. There is no go-between nor a formally set date. At the wedding the "shame-covering parasol" must be opened fully. On reaching her new husband's home she enters by the front entrance. /99/ A widow may marry again and again. Furthermore, she can have a husband marry into her household.

(3) Birth

842 [782] 843 844 Despite the hard life of the Miao, the desire for sons is very strong with both rich and poor. When a Miao man has no son at middle age he must pray to the gods and make a vow, for the early birth of a son. A pregnant Miao woman keeps on working. At the time of delivery, they use a bamboo sifter placed on the ground, lined with cotton wadding on which is placed a layer of ragged garments. The woman stands with her legs apart, the body slightly bending, her two hands gripping the side of a bed or a bench. If she happens to be working on a mountainside and does not have time to get back home, then she chooses a place under the shade of a tree where she can easily get a grip. If the newborn child does not cry, she digs [825] out a blood clot from its mouth, or sometimes she keeps a cat ready on the side, and hits it to make it meow so as to startle the infant awake. 845 In case of complicated childbirth, an experienced old woman in the village is asked to help extract the child with the hands. Should an infant die in the womb, it is taken out with a hook, or sometimes a sorcerer priest is

9: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

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(As usual, the ancestors for three generations are called by name in succession according to age and invited to eat and offered the food. After this, the tables are set and the descendants and guests eat).

X. OFFERINGS AFTER A PERSON HAS DIED

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You (mentions his name), you cannot come to life again as a person. You are a living demon. I have prepared wine nine times for you to drink (so you can drink nine times). Your meat is cooked. I am offering meat for you to eat. If you cannot eat it all, you must not give it to a sick demon (that causes sickness) to eat or a death demon (that causes death). You must give it to your female and male ancestors for three generations to eat. When you have eaten it, you should go and be near the clothing and belt of your grandmother and the clothing and belt of your husband's grandfather. If the Lolo are many, your grandmother will help you look after them. If the Chinese are numerous, she will also help you look after them. Now the meat is done. You cannot become alive again as a human being. You are living as a demon. Now I have prepared nine cups of wine and nine bowls of meat for you to eat. I am offering meat and rice for you to eat. If you cannot eat it all up, do not give it to the demons of death to eat. If you cannot eat it all, you must offer it to your female and male ancestors for three generations to eat. When you have eaten, you go and get near your husband's grandmother's clothing and get into your husband's grandfather's clothing. If the Lolo are numerous (in Hades) your husband's grandmother will look after them for you. If the Chinese are many, your husband's grandfather will look after them for you. Now I have already offered you nine cups of wine nine times to drink. I will now release you to go on the old road. You must go to Ntsə's dwelling in heaven and live there.

(When the above has been repeated, the bamboo divining sticks are used and the name of the deceased person is called. The divining sticks indicate whether the deceased is pleased or not. If not more offerings are made until the deceased soul is satisfied.)

XI. THE OFFERINGS AT THE SAO CH'IEN CEREMONY (ON THE TWELFTH DAY AFTER THE BURIAL) (THIS CEREMONY IS IN THE HOME)

Xai, xai, xai. Yesterday you (the deceased) deceived the demons. You came back to-day instead. (The burial reckons as the first day. On the 12th. (the 11th.) the dead person deceives the demons into thinking he will come back. He actually returns on the 12th. day, counted the 13th. Have you come back to find your bed and bedding? I prepared

[22 cont.]
586 marriage. The amount of indemnity varies from under one hundred to several hundred dollars, fixed and guaranteed by relatives of both families at the time of negotiation to avoid future complications. Of course, this kind of divorce is not only limited to pre-arranged marriages by parents, the fact is that even in marriages of love, separations often occur due to incompatibility and difference of opinions. But whenever children are born within the wedlock, divorces never occur.

768 587 [589] There are very few cases of young widowhood among the Miao-I. According to customs a young widow may return to her own family six months after the death of her husband. Among the neighboring Long-skirt Miao the wife may go out through the back door to "yao-ma lang" with another man hardly before her husband breathes his last on the deathbed. The children of the deceased father generally remain in his family to be looked after by the grandparents, but the widow may bring them along to her own family if her deceased husband's family is poor and unable to support them. [23] At the same time the widow's parents may proceed to find another husband for their daughter. After marriage the second husband has to pay $4.20 to the wife's family, from which $1.20 is given to the deceased husband's family as "incense money" for sacrifices to his spirit. At the wedding the bride is escorted on foot by two old women to her husband's house, where feasts may be given and the occasion celebrated if his family is well-to-do.

582 Of course, the Miao also have certain taboos in their marriage system. Between sisters and brothers, between cousins and, like the Chinese, between parties of the same surname, no marriage takes place. Sometimes certain families are not matched with others although their surnames are different. For instance, the Yang family at P'ing-chai in the Chou-ch'i district in Lu-shan never have marital relations with the Pan family across the river at Hsin-chai. Between the Chinese and the Miao there are also very few instances of intermarriage. In the country the Miao, who consist of the majority of the population, maintain the most friendly relations in utter social equality

/244 cont. //

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Among the Meau in Tonkin, somewhat different legal conceptions seem to prevail, for Lajonquière (1) writes: "Cash,

1. II, pp. 319 and 320.

furniture, produce, and animals are distributed only after the death of the last parent (mother or father), for among the Meau the mother remains the head of the family /245/ after the death of her husband, and she is the owner of all his possessions until her death."

Abadie (1), too, describes customs which are likewise different from those which I found: "When the mother dies, the possessions in movable goods (money, implements, animals, and harvested produce) are distributed among the male children. The oldest son or the son who remains in the parental house becomes head of the family and is given the paternal property, on which other children may also live in accordance with special arrangements."

Dhuraratsadorn (2) also reports explicitly: "Even if the

2. Page 169.

deceased has left behind many sons and daughters, only the eldest son, as the successor of the family, inherits."

Among the Meau in Thailand, as has been said, the family unit continues to exist after the death of the great chief under the new head, and, to be sure, as long as wives of the deceased are still living. It is only after the death of the last of these wives that the married sons under the age of thirty make themselves independent and build their own homes for themselves and their wives. Since, as was set forth in detail in the chapter, "Life in the Community," the section, "Dissolution of Marriage,"

[589] younger widows usually remarry, whereas the widows already old and their children remain in the house of the deceased, it may easily happen that, after the death of these widows, minor children, that is, unmarried sons and daughters, survive. The

/246 cont./

428 [597] blood relatives, as well as adopted brothers, receive no share in the inheritance as long as the direct heirs named are present.

[756] [622] [634] Aside from possible fees, if the shaman has been asked to officiate at the burial, he, as well as the village chief, formerly the great chief, receives none of the estate. The distribution of the estate takes place under the supervision of the principal heir, who also receives the clothing of his deceased father.

[562] [596] Even if there are no sons, but daughters are present, they are still excluded from the inheritance. In this case, the oldest brother of the deceased moves into his house as the chief heir and new head of the large family, takes over all the property of the deceased, and provides for the girls as though he were the only son. In practice this situation probably never [597] happens, for the head of a large family to whom daughters were born, but not sons would have adopted a boy in time. The latter would then marry one of the daughters and become the sole heir. /247/ Dhuraratsadorn (1) reports in a similar vein:

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1. Page 169.

"Girls receive nothing, unless the deceased is survived exclusively by unmarried daughters. If the deceased is survived only by married daughters, all of whom have left the paternal home, they inherit nothing at all, and the estate passes to the closest male relative. An exception is made if a woman and her husband [597] live under one roof with her parents (adoption). In this case the estate is divided between her and the son of the deceased. Her husband cannot inherit from his parents, since he has given up all ties of kinship with his natural parents."

428 [597] The situation is similar in case of childlessness. In such cases, too, the man would long before have adopted one or probably several boys, who would have the same rights as natural sons. If a Meau should die after he has lost all his sons, [596] which may happen in epidemics, the oldest brother of the [764] deceased becomes the principal heir, who moves into the house of the deceased, takes care of the funeral, and with whom the [589] widows remain as a rule. Nevertheless, in this, as in every other

AKha A04
Miao AE5

M 428 [589] [596] [605] [622] [764] /247 cont./ case, the widows are free to decide whether to stay or to marry again. If there are no brothers of the deceased, the oldest cousin takes their place; if cousins, too, are lacking, the village chief takes care of the burial and distributes the estate among the house owners of his village.

Among the Akha, under somewhat different regulations, the oldest son of the deceased is the principal heir; if there is no son, the oldest brother.

A 428 [596] Among the Akha, however, the principal heir takes over only the house of the deceased. The other possessions, such as money, domestic animals, house furnishings, implements, and supplies, are distributed equally among all the sons of the deceased, without waiting for the death of the wife or wives of the former head. If there are no surviving sons, the brothers of the deceased take their place. At any rate, the female members of the family of the deceased, regardless of whether they are widows or daughters, are not considered any more than they are among Meau. They retain only the clothing and the few ornaments that represent their meager personal property, and otherwise they go completely empty-handed.

A [562] [422]

A [595] /248/ If the chief wife dies, her husband inherits everything, even her personal clothing. Usually, however, he then distributes the latter among the other women who belong to the household.

A [751] [622] Among the Akha, too, other persons, such as the chief or shaman, have no claim to the estate. Testamentary dispositions are possible only within the legal inheritance regulations. The father of a family, for instance, may, during his lifetime, specify which of his sons should inherit, say, a ring that he particularly values. He can thus pass over the principal heir and bestow the article on a younger son. He cannot, however, bequeath any article of his property to a friend or blood brother outside the family.

A [572] [608]